

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 06274 01 OF 02 251350Z

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 6274

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR EG US IS

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL

SUMMARY: ON PRESIDENT SADAT'S INSTRUCTIONS, FAHMY AND GAMASY GAVE ME A MAP LAST NIGHT IN ALEXANDRIA REPRESENTING AN EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL. THEY ASKED THAT I SEND DESCRIPTION AND MAP TO YOU URGENTLY. THE MAP SHOULD GO BY SPECIAL COURIER, BUT THEY OBJECTED TO MY SUGGESTION THAT I CARRY IT BACK. THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT MY DOING SO WOULD BE TOO VISIBLE AND COULD CAUSE GOE EMBARRASSMENT WITH OTHER ARABS. I AM, THEREFORE, SENDING IT WITH SY AGENT SARGENT, WHO ACCOMPANIED ME TO CAIRO A FEW DAYS AGO AS COURIER. HE IS BOOKED ON TOMORROW MORNING'S TWO FLIGHT. YOU SHOULD HAVE MAP SAME EVENING.

IN PRESENTING COUNTERPROPOSAL, FAHMY CALLED IT A RESPONSE TO THE "UNACCEPTABLE" AND OUTRAGEOUS" ISRAELI PROPOSAL. GOE WILL NEVER ACCEPT CONCEPT OF ISRAELI CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION ANYWHERE IN SINAI, SINCE DOING SO WOULD RECOGNIZE LEGITIMACY OF ISRAELI MILITARY OCCUPATION. ESSENCE OF EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL PLACES GIDI AND MITLA PASSES ENTIRELY IN THEIR HANDS. EGYPTIAN FORWARD LINE WOULD PASS JUST TO THE EAST OF THE EASTERN ENTRANCES TO THE PASSES, WHILE THEIR MAIN LINE WOULD BE AT WESTERN ENTRANCES AND THUS BRING MAIN EGYPTIAN FORCES INTO SINAI. ISRAELI FORWARD LINE WOULD BE APPROXIMATELY 20 KILOMETERS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 06274 01 OF 02 251350Z

FARTHER EAST WITH A UNEF ZONE SEPARATING THE TWO FORWARD

LINES. ISRAELI MAIN LINE WOULD BE ANOTHER 30 KILOMETERS TO THE EAST. LARGE SEGMENT OF SOUTHWESTERN SINAI AREA, INCLUDING OIL FIELDS AND EL-TOR, WOULD BE UNDER EGYPTIAN CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION. THREE US-MANNED MONITORING STATIONS ARE INCLUDED. BALANCE OF FORCES SHOULD BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL FOR MAIN FORCE AREAS. COUNTERPROPOSAL, AS I ANALYZE IT, IS SLIGHTLY MODIFIED VERSION OF ONE OF GAMASY'S IDEAS PRESENTED AND REJECTED AT ASWAN.

FAHMY AND GAMASY ACKNOWLEDGED EGYPTIAN COUNTER-PROPOSAL DEMANDS MORE THAN SADAT AGREED TO AT ASWAN, BUT INSISTED ISRAELI TACTICS DICTATE SUCH A RESPONSE. FAHMY ASSURED ME THAT, IN FINAL ANALYSIS, POSITIONS AGREED TO EARLIER BY PRESIDENT SADAT REMAIN ACCEPTABLE, BUT EGYPTIANS, LIKE ISRAELIS, ARE PREPARED TO DO SOME HARD BARGAINING. THROUGH US HELP, HE HOPES, THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO PARTIES WILL GRADUALLY BE NARROWED UNTIL USG IS ABLE TO PRESENT A PLAN ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH. END SUMMARY

1. WHEN I ARRIVED AT FAHMY'S SUITE AT THE PALESTINE HOTEL IN ALEXANDRIA LAST NIGHT, I FOUND MARQUIS CHILDS AND HIS WIFE THERE. CHILDS WAS INTERVIEWING FAHMY. AFTER ABOUT 30 MINUTES OR SO GAMASY SHOWED UP CARRYING AN ENVELOPE. THE CHILDS REMAINED FOR ABOUT ANOTHER 15 MINUTES OR SO, WHILE FAHMY FINISHED ANSWERING THEIR QUESTIONS. NOTHING WAS SAID ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF MY SUDDENLY APPEARING.

2. AFTER THEY HAD LEFT, GAMASY PRODUCED A MAP, WHICH FAHMY DESCRIBED AS AN EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL. AS THE PRESIDENT HAD TOLD ME THE PREVIOUS DAY, FAHMY STATED, THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. AT THE STRATEGY SESSION CALLED BY PRESIDENT SADAT EARLIER IN THE DAY, THE PRESIDENT HAD APPROVED HIS AND GAMASY'S IDEA OF PRESENTING A COUNTERPROPOSAL AND HAD INSTRUCTED GAMASY TO PREPARE A MAP SHOWING SAME. FAHMY AT FIRST SAID HE HOPED THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL WOULD BE PRESENTED BY THE US TO BOTH PARTIES AS AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL, BUT HE SUBSEQUENTLY

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 06274 01 OF 02 251350Z

ACKNOWLEDGED THAT WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO DO SO. HE ASKED, HOWEVER, THAT WE PRESENT THE MAP TO THE ISRAELIS AS AN EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL. HE ALSO ASKED IF PRESIDENT FORD HAD SENT A LETTER TO RABIN ASKING THE ISRAELIS TO RECONSIDER. I RECALLED I HAD TOLD THE PRESIDENT THE PREVIOUS DAY THAT WE WERE THINKING OF DOING SO AND HE COULD FEEL CONFIDENT WE WOULD DO WHATEVER WE DEEM TO BE HELPFUL. (RE 147834, I THINK IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO

CONFIRM TO FAHMY THAT WE HAVE SENT SUCH LETTER ONCE THIS HAS BEEN DONE.)

3. FAHMY WAS MOST ANXIOUS THAT I SEND THE MAP TO YOU BY SPECIAL COURIER ASAP. I AGREED AND SUGGESTED THAT I TAKE IT BACK TODAY. BOTH FAHMY AND GAMASY STRONGLY OBJECTED TO HIS IDEA. THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT A TRIP BACK TO THE US BY ME JUST AFTER MY RETURN TO CAIRO WOULD BE TOO VISIBLE AND AROUSE SUSPICIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD THAT THE EGYPTIANS ARE PUTTING FORWARD A COUNTERPROPOSAL. WHILE EGYPTIANS ARE INDEED DOING SO, THEY STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THESE EXCHANGES AS UNOSTENTATIOUS AS POSSIBLE. I SHOULD THEREFORE SEND A COURIER AND NOT GO BACK MYSELF UNTIL A POINT HAS BEEN REACHED WHEN THE US IS READY TO PUT FORWARD A PROPOSAL OF ITS OWN. IN VIEW OF FAHMY/GAMASY REQUEST, I TOLD THEM I WOULD ARRANGE THAT SY SPECIAL AGENT WALTER SARGENT (WHO FLEW WITH ME FROM WASHINGTON TO CAIRO AS COURIER CARRYING THE ISRAELI MAP) ACT IN THAT CAPACITY AGAIN AND TAKE THE NEW EGYPTIAN MAP WITH HIM. SARGENT IS DUE IN CAIRO TODAY FROM ATHENS AND WE HAVE BOOKED HIM ON TOMORROW MORNING TWA FLIGHT DIRECTLY TO THE STATES. WILL PROVIDE EXACT ETA BY SEPTTEL.

4. AFTER EXPRESSING HIS SATISFACTION, FAHMY SAID THAT HE WANTED TO MAKE A FEW COMMENTS BY WAY OF BACKGROUND. AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, HE EMPHASIZED, THE GOE WILL NEVER "AT ANY TIME, AT ANY PLACE" ACCEPT ISRAELI CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN "ONE INCH OF OUR LAND." THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL SUGGESTING AREAS OF ISRAELI CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IS A "NON-STARTER IRRESPECTIVE OF THE ZONE." ISRAEL IS OCCUPYING THE SINAI BY MILITARY FORCE AND MUST GET OUT. FOR EGYPT TO ACCEPT A CONCEPT OF ISRAELI CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN SINAI, FAHMY ARGUED,

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 CAIRO 06274 01 OF 02 251350Z

WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO ACCEPTING THE LEGITIMACY OF THE ISRAELI PRESENCE. HE REPEATED THIS POINT SEVERAL TIMES. ALMOST AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, HE INDICATED THAT GAZA IS AN EXCEPTION. GOE DOES NOT OBJECT TO ISRAELI CIVIL ADMINISTRATION THERE, SINCE GAZA WAS NEVER LEGALLY EGYPTIAN TERRITORY. FAHMY THEN ASKED GAMASY TO EXPLAIN THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL AS SHOWN ON THE MAP.

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 06274 02 OF 02 251347Z

46

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 CAIRO 6274

NODIS/CHEROKEE

5. AFTER NOTING THAT THE MAP ON WHICH HE HAD DRAWN THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL IS THE SAME SCALE AS THE ISRAELI MAP, GAMASY POINTED OUT THE PRESENT EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI FORWARD POSITIONS, FOUR NEWLY DRAWN AND MARKED LINES AND A HATCHMARKED AREA OF EGYPTIAN CIVILAIN ADMINSTRATION. THESE HE EXPLAINED AS FOLLWS:

A) THE EGYPTIAN FORWARD REPEAT FORWARD LINE (LINE A) WOULD MOVE EAST TO JUST BEYOND THE EASTERN ENTRANCE OF THE TWO PASSES OF GIDI AND MITLA. ANCHORED IN THE NORTH AT A POINT ROUGHLY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SABKHAT AL-BARDAWIL ISLAND CHAIN, IT RUNS JUST EAST OF MASFAQ AND PROCEEDS IN A SOUTHERLY DIRECTION SLIGHTLY TO THE EAST OF THE EASTERN ENTRANCES OF THE TWO PASSES, THEN RUNS SOUTHEAST FOR A CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE UNTIL IT CURVES SHARPLY SOUTHWEST TO THE GULF OF SUEZ AND TERMINATES AT A POINT BELOW EL-TOR.

B) THE EGYPTIAN MAIN RPT MAIN FORCE LINE (LINE B) ALSO STARTS AT THE SABKHAT AL-BARDAWIL ABOUT 30 KILOMETERS TO THE WEST OF LINE A, RUNS THROUGH BIR EL-ABD AND THEN, PARALLELING THE EGYPTIAN FORWARD LINE, EXTENDS ALONG THE WESTERN RPT WESTERN ENTRACES OF THE GIDI AND MITLA PASSES. RATHER THAN TERMINATE AT THE GULF OF SUEZ, HOWEVER, IT ENDS AT A LINE DRAWN ROUGHLY AT RIGHT ANGLES FROM A POINT ON THE GULF OF SUEZ JUST NORTH OF THE RAS MATARMA PENINSULA ALONG THE MOUNTAIN RIDGE UNTIL THE LATTER MEETS THE EGYPTIAN FORWARD LINE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 06274 02 OF 02 251347Z

THE ENTIRE AREA SOUTH OF THAT LINE TO THE GULF OF SUEZ, INCLUDING THE ABU RODEIS AND BALAIM FIELDS AND EL-TOR,

IS MARKED AS UNDER "EGYPTIAN CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION."
UNDER THIS CONCEPT BOTH THE GIDI AND MITLA PASSES (ALSO
THE SIDR PASS) WOULD BE ENTIRELY RPT ENTIRELY IN
EGYPTIAN HANDS.

C) THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE (LINE C) PARALLELS THE
EGYPTIAN FORWARD LINE, BUT IS SOME 20 KILOMETERS OR SO TO
THE EAST. THE ISRAELI MAIN FORCE LINE (LINE D) DOES THE
SAME 30 KILOMETERS OR SO FARTHER TO THE EAST.

D) A ROUGHLY 20 KILOMETER WIDE UN BUFFER ZONE
SEPARATES THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI FORWARD LINES.

E) US-MANNED MONITORING STATIONS ARE MARKED AT
JABAL UMM KHUSHAIB, AT HAMAM FARAUM (AS IN THE LATEST
ISRAELI PLAN) AND ONE TO BE BUILT AT JABAL YALA1 59
MONITOR TROOP MOVEMENTS IN THE ISRAELI AREA.

6. GAMASY STATED THAT THE EGYPTIAN LINES IN THE SOUTH
(I.E. THE CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION ZONE) HAD BEEN DRAWN TO
ASSURE GREATER SECURITY FOR THE GULF OF SUEZ AREA. WHILE
EL-TOR HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE EGYPTIAN CIVIL ADMINISTRATION
ZONE, THIS ASPECT WAS NEGOTIABLE. I NOTED HIS CONCEPT
WOULD PUT THE EGYPTIAN MAIN FORCES BACK INTO THE SINAI.
GAMASY RESPONDED THAT A BALANCE OF FORCES SHOULD ALSO BE
WORKED OUT BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL FOR THE MAIN FORCES AREAS.

7. I SAID I WANTED TO BE QUITE CLEAR ON WHAT THE EGYPTIANS
WERE NOW PROPOSING, SINCE IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THEY WERE
DEMANDING MORE THAN THE PRESIDENT HAD AGREED TO AT ASWAN
LAST MARCH, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO THE PASSES AND IN
THE OILFIELDS AREAS. AT ASWAN, I RECALLED, THE PRESIDENT
HAD PROPOSED A CONCEPT WHEREBY THE PASSES, INCLUDING BOTH
ENTRANCES, WOULD BE IN UNEF HANDS AND AN ACCESS CORRIDOR
WOULD CONNECT THE MAIN EGYPTIAN AREA AND THE OILFIELDS.
GAMASY FIRST CONTENDED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD MEANT THAT
EGYPTIAN FORCES SHOULD BE AT THE WESTERN ENTRANCES OF THE
PASSES AND ISRAELI FORCES AT THE EASTERN ENTRANCES. FAHMY
CORRECTED HIM AND RESTATED THE PRESIDENT'S ASWAN POSITION.

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 06274 02 OF 02 251347Z

GAMASY ALSO INSISTED THE ACCESS CORRIDOR IDEA, WHT
VIRTUALLY ADJACENT EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI ROADS, IS NOT
FEASIBLE. ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN TROOPS WOULD BE TOO CLOSE
TO EACH OTHER.

8. FAHMY THEN TOOK OVER AND SAID WE WOULD READILY SEE
WHAT THE PRESIDENT IS DOING. DESPITE HIS OUTRAGE
OVER THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL, HE HAS DECIDED TO SUBMIT A
COUNTERPROPOSAL TO KEEP THE BALL IN PLAY. FAHMY ACKNOWLEDGED

THAT THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL DEMANDS MUCH MORE THAN WHAT THE PRESIDENT AGREED TO AT ASWAN, BUT CONTENTED THAT THE "OUTRAGEOUS" ISRAELI PROPOSAL DICTATES SUCH A RESPONSE. IN SUBMITTING IT, HOWEVER, HE WANTED PRESIDENT FORD AND YOU TO KNOW THAT, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, ALL OF THE POSITIONS THAT SADAT AGREED TO AT ASWAN REMAIN VALID AND ACCEPTABLE TO THE PRESIDENT. IN THE PRESENT BARGAINING SITUATION EGYPT MUST AND WILL PUT FORWARD JUST AS EXTREME DEMANDS AS ISRAEL HAS DONE. HOPEFULLY, WITH US HELP, THE TWO POSITIONS CAN EVENTUALLY BE NARROWED TO A POINT WHERE THE USG CAN PUT FORWARD A PROPOSAL OF ITS OWN THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. BEFORE THIS POINT IS REACHED, THERE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE SEVERAL MORE EXCHANGES. GAMASY ECHOED THIS VIEW, STATING WE WERE NOW AT A POINT SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH EXISTED WHEN THE KM 101 TALKS HAD FIRST BEGUN. IT HAD TAKEN 17 EXCHANGES WITH THE ISRAELIS, HE RECALLED, BEFORE ANYTHING MEANINGFUL HAD BEEN WORKED OUT. HE, TOO, FORESAW A LONG SERIES OF EXCHANGES, BUT COMMENTED RATHER IMPATIENTLY THAT, "WE ARE WASTING TIME."

9. WHEN LEAVING FAHMY AND GAMASY, I TOLD THEM I WOULD REPORT THE EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL TELEGRAPHICALLY AS SOON AS I GOT BACK TO CAIRO AND COULD DRAFT THE NECESSARY MESSAGE AND ALSO REAFFIRMED I WOULD SEND THE MAP TO YOU BY SPECIAL COURIER. FAHMY EMPHASIZED THE URGENCY OF GETTING SOMETHING WORKED OUT.

10. COMMENT: AS I ANALYZE THE EGYPTIAN COUNTER-PROPOSAL, IT IS A MODIFIED VERSION OF ONE OF GAMASY'S IDEAS ADUMBRATED AT ASWAN AND REJECTED THERE. ALTHOUGH GAMASY STILL SEEMS TO CLING TO THE IDEA THAT THIS LINES
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 CAIRO 06274 02 OF 02 251347Z

ARE RATIONAL FROM BOTH AN EGYPTIAN AND AN ISRAELI DEFENSIVE POINT OF VIEW, FAHMY, AT LEAST, IS UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE LIKELY TO ACCEPT IT. I AM SURE THAT THIS IS ALSO THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW. AS FAHMY FRANKLY ADMITS, THE EGYPTIANS BELIEVE THAT WITH THIS KIND OF MAXIMAL COUNTERPROPOSAL, THEY ARE SHOWING RABIN THAT THEY, TOO, CAN TAKE TOUGH BARGAINING POSITIONS. AT THE SAME TIME THEY CANNOT BE ACCUSED OF ABORTING FURTHER TALKS BY HAVING REJECTED THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL. THE EGYPTIANS SEE HARD BARGAINING AHEAD AND STILL LOOK TO US FOR HELP IN EVENTUALLY GETTING THE ISRAELIS OUT OF THE PASSES.
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